The country has had the benefit of Sir E. Ryan's services down to the end of his long life, and it may truly be said that he died in harness. When the question of filling the junior offices of the Civil Service by competition, rather than by patronage, was decided by the establishment of the Civil Service Commission, Sir Edward's administrative abilities caused him to be selected to superintend the experiment, and consequently, by an Order in Council dated May 21, 1855, he was named first Commissioner. The office being an unpaid one, he still retained the Assistant-Controllership of the Exchequer till 1862, in which year the Commission was established on a permanent footing. Under the presidency of Sir E. Ryan, the duties of the Commission have been gradually increasing yearly, the mere test examination being followed by limited competition, to be soon succeeded by open competition as at present. During the twenty years that Sir Edward was at the head of this Commission, he was its guiding spirit, giving to it his time and thoughts with a tact and sagacity rarely surpassed in the public service. In addition to his permanent duties, Government availed themselves of Sir Edward's advice and experience as a Railway Commissioner, in 1846, and in other ways. He also took a great interest in the prosperity of the University of London, of which he was a member of the Senate, and for a short period after the death of Mr. Grote, he served as Vice-Chancellor. He was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1860.

Sir Edward married, in 1814, Louisa, daughter of William Whitmore, Esq., of Dudmaston, Shropshire. His death took place at Dover, where he had just gone for his vacation, on the night of Sunday, August 22, 1875, after an illness of four days, and within a week of completing his 82nd year. He retained his consciousness and vigour of intellect to the end. His kindly face and stately figure will long be missed, not only by his official colleagues, but also by society generally, in which he has always been much esteemed.

William Selwyn,* D.D., Canon of Ely, and Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity in the University of Cambridge, was born in 1806, and was the eldest of three sons, all of them distinguished.

After leaving Eton, he entered St. John's College, Cambridge, in 1824, and soon began to gather the laurels of University honours. For three years successively he carried off Sir W. Browne's medal for the best Greek Ode; and in one of these years, 1826, he gained all the Browne Medals, a triumph which has, it is said, been only achieved three times in the course of a century. In this same year he also carried off the Craven

* For much of the matter in this notice, the compiler begs to tender his acknowledgments to the author of the Johnian magazine *The Eagle*.

Scholarship. Two years later he came out Senior Classic and First Chancellor's Medallist.

His, too, was the enviable possession of the *mens sana in corpore sano*; as he long delighted in manly exercises; and as one of the members of the Lady Margaret boat club, and as one of the crew of the first "eight" which was ever seen on the Cam, he may be considered as one of the fosterers of that truly British recreation which has since formed so marked a feature in our University pastimes. We have already alluded to William Selwyn's classical distinctions; nor were his mathematical powers less brilliant, coming out, as he did, as sixth wrangler in that memorable group of Johnians commonly spoken of by the happy appellation of the "Pleiades," as the tripos list for that year was distinguished.

In the year 1829 he entered Holy Orders, gaining also that same year the Norrisian prize for the best essay on the subject of "The Doctrine of Types, and its influence on the Interpretation of the New Testament." In 1831 he was presented to the rectory of Branstone, in Leicestershire, by the late Duke of Rutland, and in 1833 he was installed a canon residentiary of Ely Cathedral, which position he continued to hold to the period of his death.

Both as a conscientious parish priest and a distinguished member of a cathedral chapter, Canon Selwyn's attention was soon drawn to questions of importance affecting the welfare of the Church of England, of which he was ever an attached and faithful member; and he ever took a lively interest in the work both of the spiritual efficiency as well as material splendour of our time-honoured Cathedrals; and was always ready with unstinted liberality to aid in the restoration of the Cathedral of his own Ely, now one of the glories of the English Church.

The following anecdotes serve also to illustrate his urbane and playful wit.

In the year 1855 the Lady Margaret Professorship of Divinity became vacant, and three candidates, eventually, went to the poll for the honour. These were Mr. Henry John Rose, afterwards Archdeacon of Bedford, Mr. Selwyn himself, and the Rev. Harold Browne, subsequently and successively Bishop of Ely and of Winchester. At the close of the poll it was generally believed that Professor Browne had a majority of votes, and thereupon Canon Selwyn generously congratulated him in these characteristic words: "It is *Harold* the Conqueror this time, not *William*." It presently turned out, however, that both the Canon and the Professor had each received 43 votes (those for Mr. Rose being 17 only), but the Vice-Chancellor of the day, by his casting vote, eventually caused Canon Selwyn to be established in the Lady Margaret Professorship.

With another person, one of our Fellows, who like himself was much interested in the study of solar physics, but was at first personally unknown to him, he kindly sought to become better

acquainted, and commenced a correspondence, and subsequently a warm friendship, in these genial terms: "Sir, permit me to introduce myself to you through the medium of our mutual, warm, but rather distant friend, the Sun."

It is, indeed, in connection with Solar Astronomy that the name of William Selwyn will be best known and longest remembered in this Society. For the whole of one of the eleven-year periods of apparently maximum and minimum solar energy (viz. from 1863 to 1873 inclusive) he caused to be taken at Ely a very regular and very valuable series of Solar "Autographs," as he playfully termed his photographic pictures of the Sun's disk, chiefly with the view of helping the solution of the vexed question of the relation of Planetary configurations to the abundance or paucity of solar spots. He hardly thought himself that any such connection existed, though, as is well known, other and very eminent physicists entertain a different opinion, "*Adhuc sub judice lis est*," therefore. It may be observed that these photographs are the work of Mr. Titterton, of Ely, and were taken by means of a 6-inch achromatic, by Slater, of London, and possess great beauty and distinctness of detail, and will be of great value by way of reference and comparison with the equally valuable Kew series, now being discussed at the Kew Observatory, at the expense of Mr. De La Rue.

As regards the lamented Canon's personal disposition and qualifications, his sympathies were indeed of the widest. Whatever the occasions might be which commended themselves to his heart—whether home or foreign missions, the relief of spiritual destitution, or the relief or education of the poor, or the furtherance of the institutions of his loved University, he was always ready with speech or sermon, with active exertion or liberal contribution. Few were there, moreover, at Cambridge or elsewhere, who have not felt the charm of that exquisite, and melodious, and persuasive voice, or who cannot recall to mind some of those words of wit and wisdom which seemed ever to be falling without effort from his lips.

It was in the year 1866 that the equestrian accident occurred to him which, though he recovered from it for the time, there can be little doubt caused in the end a premature decline in his bodily powers, and cut short his valuable life. Whilst laid on his couch, previously to his recovery, he carefully watched, as far as he was able, the remarkable shower of November meteors by which that year was made memorable. But the effects of the shock to his system told, subsequently, more and more upon the Professor, and manifested itself in a paralytic affection which began slowly to pervade his bodily frame, though not his mind, and on April 23, 1875, his spirit passed away to a yet higher and brighter existence, with a "hope full of immortality."

Professor Selwyn was a valuable member of the Committee

for the Revision of the authorized version of the Old Testament; and from the commencement of the work to the day of his death the subject occupied much of his best thoughts and attention.

To the last day of his life also the Professor was occupied with the correction of the proof-sheets of a Lecture "On the Pastoral Office," and his interest in the subjects connected with our noble science continued also to the last unabated, and he expressed only very shortly before he died his admiration of the beautiful spectacle presented by the Moon one evening, and of the planet *Jupiter*. On Thursday, April 29, his mortal remains were laid in the cemetery at Ely, by the side of those of his brother-in-law, the late Dean Peacock.

CHARLES BLACKER VIGNOLES was born at Woodbrook, in the county of Wexford, on the 31st of May 1793, his father, Captain Vignoles, of the 43rd Regiment of Light Infantry, having been stationed in Ireland at that time. Captain Vignoles died of yellow fever at Guadaloupe, in 1794, and his widow survived him only a few weeks. Their only son, a boy but a few months old, was exchanged as a prisoner of war against a young French lieutenant, receiving a commission in the 43rd Regiment by way of recompense for his own orphan condition, and in recognition of his father's merits. In after years he exchanged into the 1st Royals, and was present at the taking of Bergen-op-Zoom, and at the battle of Vittoria.

The youthful Vignoles was placed under the care of his maternal grandfather, Dr. Charles Hutton, F.R.S., Royal Military Academy, Woolwich, by whom his natural talent and bent of mind for scientific pursuits were carefully developed. The ordinary subjects—the *ingenuæ artes*—of a sound and liberal education were acquired by him more completely than has been the case with many eminent members of the Profession of Engineering, which he afterwards adopted. But his early training in the theory and practice of mathematical calculation, under so eminent an instructor, gave him advantages of which he successfully availed himself in the preparation and working out of those large engineering schemes with which his name is associated. Mr. Vignoles has been heard to say that the computations required for the logarithmic tables published by his grandfather were (under the Doctor's supervision) chiefly undertaken by himself. The effects of such an apprenticeship were an unusual readiness and expertness in calculation, a profound acquaintance with the various systems of notation and measurement both English and foreign, and a singular power of lucid and methodical tabulation of results in all departments of practical science.

Mr. Vignoles made no pretension to be ranked in the list of the more advanced students of astronomy. The needful qualifications for such a position, early acquired experimental skill